**Senate**

**Minutes**

**December 8, 2023**

**CE339 / MS Teams**

The Chair, C. Kreber, called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm.

**1. Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum and Land Acknowledgement**

The Chair began with the acknowledgement that Cape Breton University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) people first signed with the British Crown in 1726. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

**Present:**

Catherine Arseneau, Sahand Ashtab, Tammy Bernasky, Melissa Bishop, Tanya Brann-Barrett, Martin Chandler, Paula Condon, Ayse Ersoy, Virginia Gunn, Phillip Eappen, Michael Henick, Samantha Hodder, Harkanwal Kaur, Carrie Karsgaard, Karen Kennedy, Janet Kuhnke, Carolin Kreber, Kimberley Lamarche, Tracy Lillington, Doug Lionais, Jason Loxton, Gordon MacInnis, Stephanie MacQuarrie, John Nadeau, Rod Nicholls, Felix Odartey-Wellington, Joe Parish, Erin Robertson, Karen Rowe, Nancy Spina, Jamie Tunnicliff, Bilynda Whiting, Terry MacDonald, John Mayich

**Regrets:**

Hamid Andishan, Danielle Boudreau, Colton Burke, Sean Campbell, Sahilpreet Singh Chatha, David Dingwall, Mary Beth Doucette, Kylie Ewing, Harmanjot Singh Ghuman, Jan Hancock, Hannah Lewis, Brandi Jean Lind, Ellyn Lyle, Gideon Otoibhi, Folorunsho Oduloye, Andy Parnaby, Michelle Prendergast, Juveriya Samreen, Laurianne Sylvester, Éric Thériault, Viviana Paz Contreras Venegas

**2. Pre-Budget Recommendations**

C. Kreber introduced the meeting's only agenda item: The Pre-Budget Report from the Planning and Review Committee. She referred to the document circulated in advance of the meeting and noted that if adopted by Senate, it becomes Senate's submission into the budget process for consideration by the Budget Advisory Committee.

In response to a question in regards to budget amounts for each recommendation, the Vice-President of Finance advised that the results of today’s meeting will be brought to the Budget Advisory Committee where the Committee would consider each recommendation and discuss monetary values.

K. Rowe, Chair of the Planning and Review Committee, provided an overview of the process and referred to the resulting report and recommendations for consideration as follows:

1. **Access to Day Care**

K. Rowe advised that given the increasing student population and the required increase in staff and faculty to support the population, there is a need for additional day care spots.  CBRM is currently facing a day care shortage with parents needing to have their children on wait lists before they are even born if they want to secure a spot.  For students who are travelling to Cape Breton University from within Canada or elsewhere or new faculty/ staff who are moving here to accept a position, they do not have the ability to put their children on a waitlist two years in advance.

There is a portion of students who attend the majority of their classes at the Cineplex campus and therefore the day care facilities at the CBU campus are not convenient for their needs.  Having a space at or near Cineplex where students could drop their children possibly even just for the duration of their class would improve the student's ability to attend & concentrate on classes & would alleviate the current issue of there being young children at times in classes or running free in the common areas at Cineplex.

**Motion 1: It was moved** by K. Rowe that Cape Breton University invest in increasing the size of the day care facilities and the corresponding increase in staff in order to be able to accept more children.

The following items were clarified during discussion:

* Day care on campus has always been available to community members however priority is given to CBU students and staff.
* Students did not provide any feedback or response when a message was issued in the fall, urging them to visit the advising center for information about day care services at the YMCA.
* An Independent third party runs the daycare and the number of seats is provincially regulated based on the size of the space. The ratios of the children and staff depend on the ages of the children. There currently is no one under the age of 24 months.

**Motion Carried.**

**Motion 2: It was moved** by K. Rowe that Cape Breton University investigate setting up a space for childcare at or near the Cineplex location**. Motion Carried.**

It was noted that there appears to be a communication breakdown, as there was no response from students when they were asked to inform the Advising Centre about their childcare needs. Nevertheless, it has been observed that children are being brought into the classrooms. It was advised that this could be looked into by the attendance ad hoc Committee.

1. **Classroom Learning Lab**

K. Rowe advised that the Education Department has recognized the growing need for a dedicated classroom laboratory space for the Bachelor of Education and Teacher Education programs and to invest in more dual-mode rooms to facilitate hybrid instruction and offer opportunities for CTL and interdisciplinary activities to be facilitated through efficient and collaborative timetabling and scheduling. Additionally, adding modernized classrooms and dual-mode classrooms will benefit hiring committees as candidates can present to those on campus as well as reach others who may be off campus at the time. Further, conferences held at CBU would benefit from dual-mode classrooms as presenters and attendees will be afforded the opportunity to attend virtually or in person. Although there is urgency in the Education program for dedicated spaces that reflect the modern elementary and secondary classroom, the modernized instructional spaces will benefit many faculties and departments by offering spaces that are dual-mode and equipped with modern technology.

**Motion 3: It was moved** by K. Rowe that Cape Breton University invests in dedicated Classroom Lab Spaces to (1) align with the corresponding increase in students, (2) to facilitate interdisciplinary education teaching and research, and (3) to offer a teaching space to other departments (I.e. CTL, micro-credentials, JKC, etc.).

**The following issues were discussed:**

* Space allocation – It was encouraged by the Interim Vice-President Academic that the discussion goes beyond the location and more regarding the quantum added to inventory and that the space is managed by enrolment and availability
* Classroom lab space is not defined in the current motion and most hybrid classrooms are not currently being utilized. It was suggested to invest in Clickshare opportunities.
* Dual-mode classrooms provide a distinct delivery that maximizes the potential of those rooms - Rooms are being utilized but not always to their maximum potential.

**Amended Motion** was moved by J. Loxton, that Cape Breton University continue to invest in upgrading our teaching spaces, including implementation of technologies like click-share and hybrid learning, and ensuring that facilities are available that support laboratory and seminar-style learning.

**Amended Motion Carried.**

1. **Research participant recruitment and study management software system**

K. Rowe advised that Sona Systems software allows universities to create and maintain a large participant pool for recruitment for in-person and online studies. It simplifies and automates a variety of processes including recruitment, scheduling, room booking, pre-screening, remuneration, and a variety of other useful functions. Currently, the Psychology Department has just bought a license for departmental use, however, several members of other departments have expressed an interest in the use of SONA as well. In addition to basic research conducted by faculty members and students, Sona could be readily utilized by other groups as well.

**Motion 4: It was moved** by K. Rowe that CBU purchase an institutional license for Sona Systems software.

In response to a request, E. Robertson as Chair of the Psychology Department, shared her view on the mini version of the software that her department has purchased and noted that they find it useful and more efficient for students and faculty.

Senators discussed the following:

* The process for requesting these types of requests and the benefits of the requests being brought to Senate and not the Research Department.
* Privacy Impact Assessment – Data stored in Canada
* Differences in the new software vs. Survey Money

**A Motion to Amend was moved** by D. Lionais that CBU Purchase an institutional license for Study Management software.

**Amended Motion Carried. (2 abstentions)**

1. **Grammarly license**

K. Rowe advised that given the high level of international students at CBU, and the importance of continuing to improve the student experience of all students improving their overall written communications would be extremely beneficial.

**Motion 5: It was moved** by K. Rowe that CBU purchase an institutional license for Grammarly and work to update a Policy to regulate its use.

Senators shared their opinions and discussed the following:

* Cheating and other issues
* Many students already struggle with English
* Underutilizing the writing centre
* Data is stored in the U.S. and would not pass the Privacy Impact Assessment
* Assistance is Corrective vs. Instructive

**Motion Defeated (1 abstention)**

**5. Upgrade laboratory facilities for teaching**

K. Rowe advised that space requirements are being addressed with new construction but the move to new space is years away. In the meantime, current lab facilities are in disrepair and under-equipped. Labs used for several public health labs and BTech labs have degrading infrastructure including reported temperature issues, two inoperable fume hoods, and poor air quality. While it is exciting to see the progress that has been made regarding the Centre for Innovation & Discovery & know that this will bring new lab spaces, we do need to ensure that the current labs & equipment are updated to ensure the safety of our students and the quality of instruction we can provide.  Safe, high-quality environments attract, and retain students and enhance the reputational capital of the university while meeting accreditation standards

**Motion 6: It was moved** by K. Rowe that CBU, in consultation with faculty, revisit the needs of our laboratories, to ensure the appropriate safety and quality of our instruction.

It was clarified that the motion is that all labs should be assessed and that the Budget Committee would decide the ones that needed the upgrades.

It was agreed to allow Melissa MacDonald who teaches in Health Services to address Senate.

Melissa MacDonald advised that she is teaching in a lab, and emphasized that the current conditions for both teaching and learning are suboptimal in many, with particular concerns about inadequate ventilation.

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**A Motion to Amend was moved** by J. Loxton that CBU, in consultation with faculty, revisit the needs of our laboratories, to ensure **physical accessibility,** and the appropriate safety and quality of our instruction.

Senators discussed the need for a defined process for updating and identifying accessibility requirements in Labs. It was noted that this is currently being worked on.

**Amended Motion Carried. (1 abstention)**

**6. Website Revision**

K. Rowe advised that a survey of faculty and librarians, along with ‘watercooler’ discussions, identified the current CBU website as inadequate and in need of special attention, with poor attention to the needs of existing students and faculty.

**Motion 7: It was moved** by K. Rowe that Cape Breton University commits to allocating the necessary financial and human resources to the reviewing and revising of its public website, with staff designation for continuous consultation with faculty, staff, current, and potential students, to ensure that the website is user-friendly, and it addresses the needs of its target population as well as meeting accessibility needs.

The Interim Vice-President Academic, Dr. Rod Nicholls, provided an update on the work currently being done on the website:

* Marketing and recruitment catering to the 18–24-year-old demographic
* Elusion Experience App launched in the New Year with current student feedback from surveys used in the process
* Academic Calendar being revamped
* Intranet getting an overhaul
* Senate Sem and Provost groups working on advising

The Registrar advised that the Academic Calendar will be moved to Pressbook. She also noted the importance of documenting the history of the University which will hopefully be included when the new version goes live.

**Motion Carried.**

**7. Accessibility / Universal Design Audit**

K. Rowe advised that this recommendation is about improving the accessibility on Campus for students, faculty, and staff.

**Motion 8: It was moved** by K. Rowe to advance the goals outlined in Cape Breton University’s (CBU) Multi-Year Accessibility Action Plan, we recommend that CBU pursue Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification for new and existing buildings as well as future acquisitions. We also recommend an external consultant be hired to review processes and procedures at Cape Breton University with the goal of removing barriers and improving accessibility and safety for students, staff, and faculty across campus now and into the future.

The Vice President of Finance noted that the Accessibility Act is creating a lot of challenges for the institution. He explained that the built environment standards and the scope of the problem have not been set. It is beyond the built environment and boils down to a commitment from everyone who attends and works at the University to share the responsibility of accessibility In and out of the classroom.

R. Nicholls noted that although the physical environment is very important, accessibility in the teaching and learning environment is also important. He explained that the CTL has brought in experts who provided workshops that included Universal Design for learning and that faculty can also work to transform practice.

It was confirmed that the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification is primarily physical accessibility. There is a certification process in built environments and universal design but it was noted that processes and procedures also need to be revised. Work is being done to promote awareness.

It was noted that there is a need for better communication between the Jennifer Keeping Centre and faculty to ensure the needs in the classroom are being met.

**Motion Carried.**

**8. Access to Lactation and Infant Feeding Space**

K. Rowe advised that this recommendation is in regard to access to breastfeeding/chest feeding/infant feeding spaces currently available at CBU for students, faculty, or staff. She explained that to her knowledge currently there is only a small space in the School of Nursing but understands that availability is an issue during the spring and summer. Given the popularity of CBU’s nursing, education & post-baccalaureate programs the number of students who are attending classes during the spring and summer semesters has increased greatly in recent years.  These students should have access to the services provided by the CBUSU Women’s Centre during the spring & summer semesters.

She advised that spaces have been secured within the CBUSU Women’s Centre. Funding for a full-year student position as the Women's Centre Coordinator for full-year operations is necessary in place of the current staffing.

**Motion 9: It was moved** by K. Rowe to fund the Women's Centre Coordinator student position for full-year operations.

It was suggested and agreed that the preamble be changed to meet the main focus of the recommendation which is funding to support a full-time position in the Women’s Centre.

It was confirmed that there currently is a space available in A wing that is always open as well as another space about to open.

**Motion Carried.**

**9. Online Proctoring**

K. Rowe advised that the pedagogy relevant to some courses enabled assessment through means other than testing, the availability of artificial intelligence has made these methods more problematic. When possible and desirable, students should write midterm and final exams on campus. A student taking an online or dual mode course at CBU who lives in the CBRM, and without extenuating circumstances, will write the midterm and final exam on campus. The students who fall into this category will be invigilated by the course instructor. Otherwise, a centralized coordinator can identify and approve an off-site proctor to invigilate the student’s exam.

**Motion 10: It was moved** by K. Rowe that Cape Breton University commit to funding an Online Invigilation Coordinator to allow programs that deliver online and dual-mode courses the opportunity to engage in off-site proctoring.

During discussion on the motion, many comments and opinions were offered to support this recommendation.

**Motion Carried.**  **(1 abstention)**

The Chair thanked Karen and the team for their dedication and hard work.

**Meeting Adjourned at 3:15 p.m.**

**Éric Thériault**

**Secretary to Senate**